

# Technology Lessons 4 Teachers NEWSLETTER

Elementary: *Storybird* Page: 2

Middle School: *bubbl.us* Page: 3

High School: Page: 5

*ThanksForTeaching.us*

SPED Learners: *Browser Books* Page: 5

ActivInspire: *Background Color* Page: 3

iPod Apps Page: 4

## 2 Ways to Explore Information

### The Full Wiki & WikiMindMap

Last April, Qwiki ([www.qwiki.com](http://www.qwiki.com)) was featured as a new way to visually explore information. Here are a few new sites to use to bring more understanding to students searching a research topic.



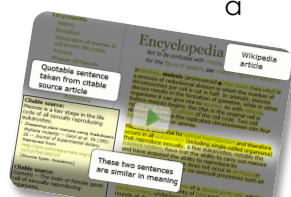
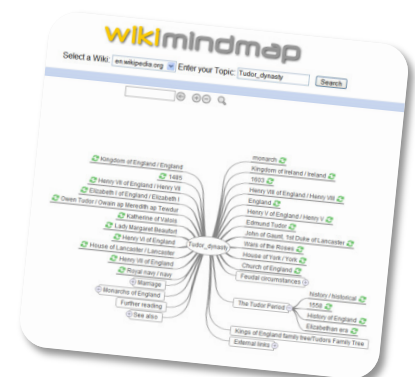
#### The Full Wiki

([www.thefullwiki.org](http://www.thefullwiki.org)) is a mash-up of *Wikipedia* entries. There are five tabs across the top –

Reference, Quiz, Facts, Map, & Search. The Reference tab finds similar sentences to those in *Wikipedia*, complete with their citations to easily find the source. It's an easy way to branch off to find authoritative sources & relevant quotes to deepen students' research. The Quiz tab provides questions over the entry to expand students' understanding on the topic. The Facts tab provides bulleted facts on the topic. The Maps tab takes *Wikipedia* articles & places them on Google Map. It essentially is geolocating *Wikipedia* entries. The last tab, Search provides related

search results for the topic of interest.

**WikiMindMap** (<http://wikimindmap.com>) is a resource for visually exploring *Wikipedia*. It is essentially a search engine for *Wikipedia* articles that uses a mind-map or web concept. Enter a search term into WikiMindMap, (be sure to select wiki – en.wikipedia.org,) & it will generate a web of links to *Wikipedia* articles about the chosen topic. It will also include related search terms within your web.





## Website 2 Check out

# Apture

[www.apture.com](http://www.apture.com)

**Apture** is a browser extension available for *Firefox* & *Google Chrome*. It allows you to search for information about a topic without leaving the page you're on. To do this, just highlight a section of text & a pop up will appear that says, "Learn More." *Apture* will then bring up a box with a list of related links with more information about your highlighted text, along with videos & images.

*Apture* is a handy tool that should make students' online research more efficient. Students reading a webpage can look up unfamiliar term, & quickly learn more about that term without having to open a new browser tab.



## Storybird

<http://storybird.com>

Five reasons why teachers love **Storybird**,

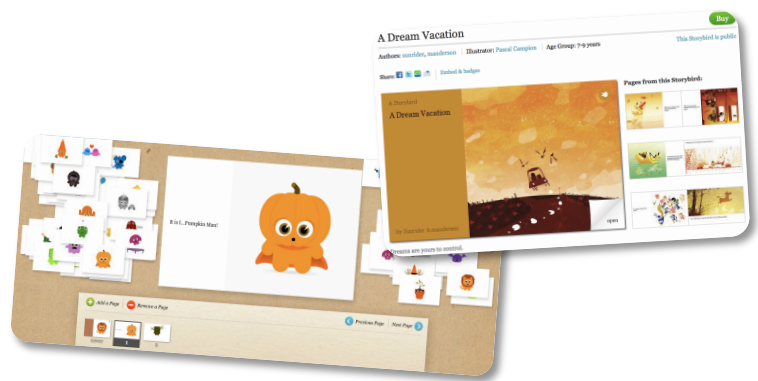
1. Gorgeous illustrations to inspire student writing.
2. Making & sharing a Storybird is easy.
3. Students can share on each other's work.
4. Can create a class account with great features.
5. Students can collaborate on creating a story.

To use Storybird you simply select either an art-inspired theme, works from Storybird artists, or by a challenge word. Then drag & drop the drawings you like into your story. Once you've selected drawings for your story, simply type in the text of your story. Anyone can create great-looking digital picture books, regardless of drawing skills or lack there-of.

You can browse through & read other stories, because everything is screened for school & age appropriate material. Once a Storybird is finished, the author selects the age group, so finding a story for you students is a trouble-free process. Class accounts make it easy to engage your students with Storybird.

See an example at,

<http://storybird.com/books/a-dream-vacation/>

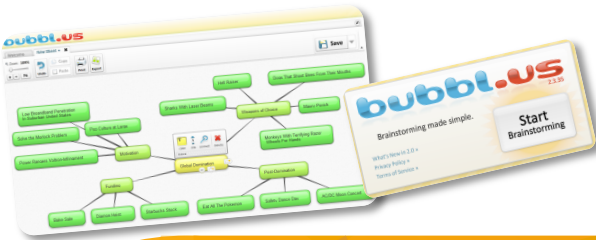




<https://bubbl.us>

Mind mapping is a valuable way of assessing a student's capability to synthesize, evaluate, & comprehend lesson material. Learn the basics for mind mapping & brainstorming with **bubbl.us**, a free & easy-to-use web app. Graphic organizers can be easily exported as a JPEG files. Perfect for all of your visual learners!

- *Classroom Ideas:*
  - **Science & Math:** At the conclusion of each instructional unit provide the students with a list of terms or concepts that were covered. Have the students, using *bubbl.us*, organize their information & connect related terms. The students can print the concept maps. Learning is stretched when the students are asked to explain their concept maps to each other & justify their relationships.



## ActivINSPIRE: Background Color

You can change the background of your flipchart pages several ways.



**Fill Tool** – Use the Fill Tool to change the background to a solid color from your toolbox's color palette. For custom colors, right click (or **Control +**


**click** on a Mac) on a color square in your toolbox. A popup menu will appear. Click the **Color Wheel** to pick a color, or the **Color Picker** to pick a color from a background or image to get an extract color match.



**Resource Browser** – Choose a background from the Resource Browser. You can add a shape such as a rectangle over the background if it is too busy to

effectively show text. The **Translucency Slider** can change the translucency of the shape to make some of the background visible. You can also use the Color Picker to match the color of the box to a color in the background.



 **Set Background** – Control + click on the flipchart page, & select the Set Background. A popup box will appear. Choose **Fill** on the left to be able to mix two different colors to make a gradient background. You can click in the bigger box to see different choices of gradient patterns. Instead of choosing Fill choose **Image**. You can then select an image from your computer to make it become your background. Click on **Apply** to set the new background.



# iPod Apps

## MathBlaster, Stack the States, & Element Matching Free

### ELEMENTARY



**MathBlaster** – Combine the fun of arcade style gameplay with math equations to provide an educational experience. Work out the sum & blast away at the answer. A game where players shoot the spaceship with the correct answer while navigating to avoid an alien attack. As players progress through the levels, the Math difficulty increases & the alien ships get faster.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL



**Stack the States** – This is an excellent app for kids trying to learn information about the individual states. There are different activities that kids can do as they answer more & more questions correctly about the states. There is a free version of this & a paid version. The free version doesn't offer as many activities as the paid version.

### HIGH SCHOOL



**Element Matching Free** – An app for advanced matching of elements & their names, orbitals, & charge. Clean visual layout and fonts, visual, auditory & tactile feedback, timed. Unobtrusive ads.

## Teacher Feature: Shawna Seeley

Mrs. Seeley is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher in our elementary building. In opportunity block she has been using technology with her students to practice problem solving.

After teaching the concepts, she decided to pull out Activotes (handheld voting devices that work with the ActivInspire system), to assess her students' learning. She then created flipcharts, or slideshows, that have choices for the students to select A, B, C, or D on their Activotes. The students loved using them & it gave her instant results on how well each student understands the concepts.

She also created a Jeopardy PowerPoint, which categorized different parts of story problems for students to solve. By pretending she was the host & they were the contestants on the game show, they had a blast learning!

Mrs. Seeley believes teaching is similar to technology; they are both constantly changing to meet the needs of the people or students.

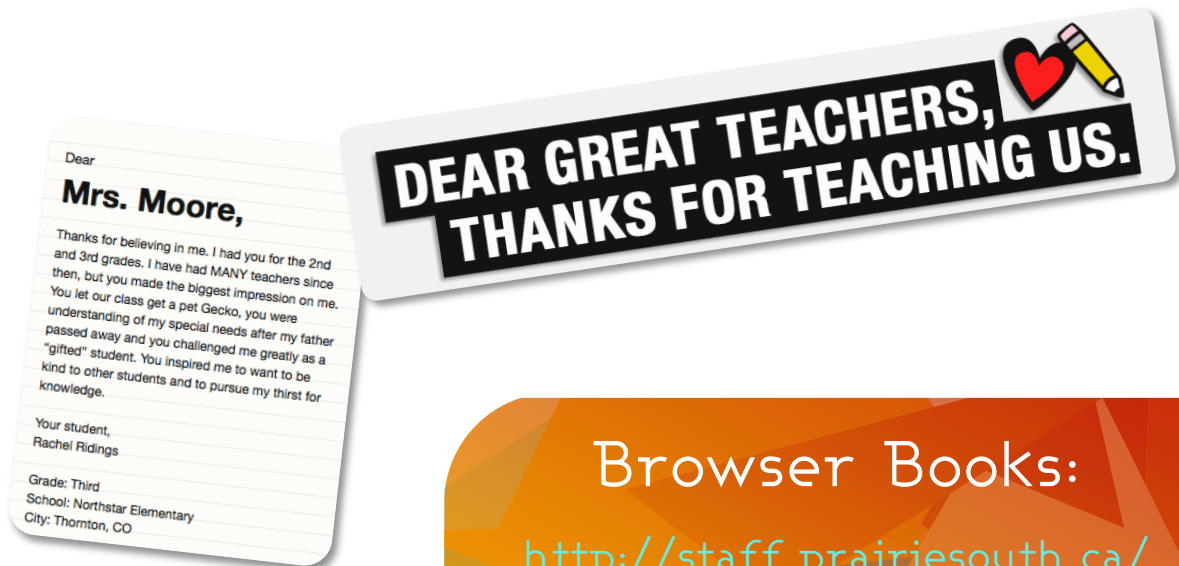
Great job again to Mrs. Seeley & all of our teachers.



# ThanksForTeaching.us:

<http://thanksforteaching.us>

A site for students of all grade levels to eloquently express the impact teachers have made on their lives. Great mini-writing piece; students can select a teacher - from any point in their academic career - draft a brief note, workshop with teacher & peers to make it "web-worthy", post the appreciation, send the link to the teacher (= making their day). Perfect anytime of years, but especially during Education Week - paras, subs (Nov. 13-19), Teacher Appreciation Week (May 7-11, 2012), School Counseling Week (Feb. 6 - 10, 2012), etc.



## Browser Books:

<http://staff.prairiesouth.ca/~cassidy.kathy/browserbooks/index.htm>

This website was created to allow beginning readers to read books on the web. Readers can click on the triangle on each page to turn the page. If they are unsure of a word, they can click on it to hear it read to them. The books have been sorted by level & by curricular area.

## Browser Books

**NOTE:** The Middle School Library now has a set of Activotes available for checkout. Talk with Mrs. VanWesten if interested.